

Exploration of the Balance Between Structure and Flexibility

A Youth Worker's Perspective



What are we learning about balance?

Three Learning Stories to explore the question

STORY 1: Creating A Teen Space - Humboldt

STORY 2: Creating A Rap - GAP

STORY 3: Creating A Video - St. Matthew's

Story 1

Creating A Teen Space

We had a starting place, some good questions, and a big idea.

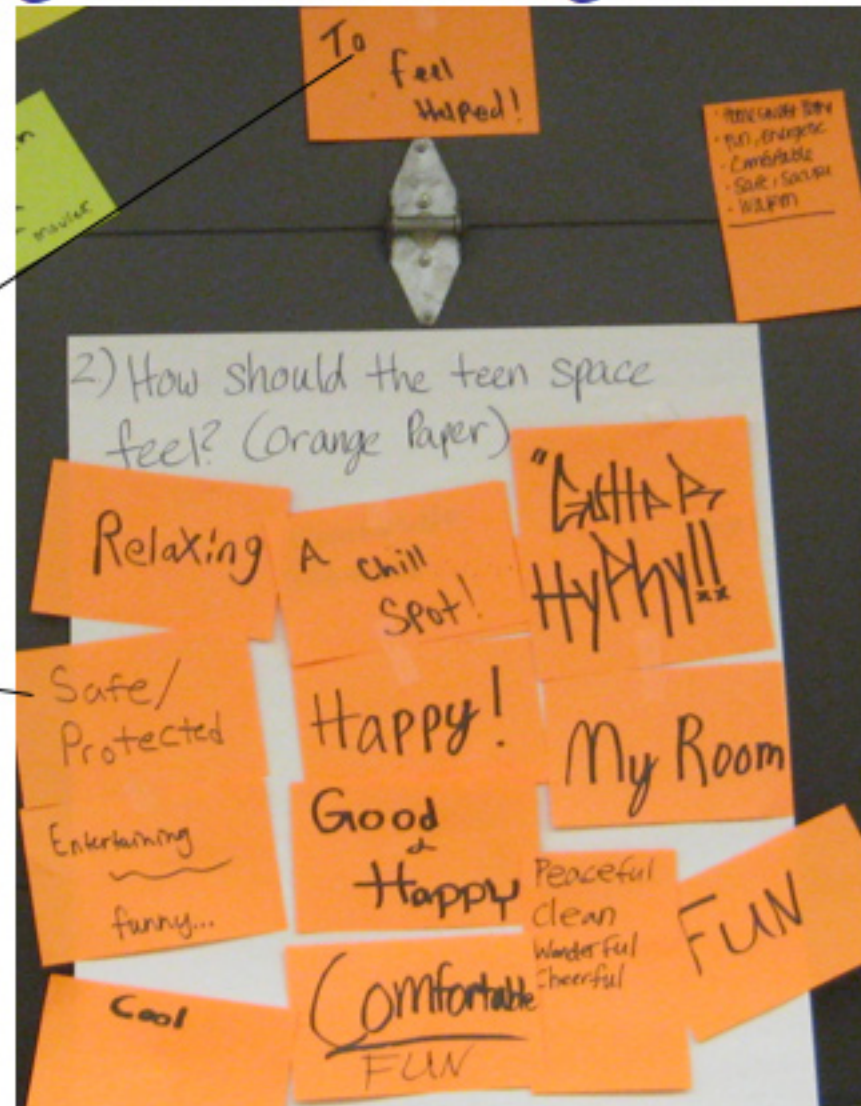
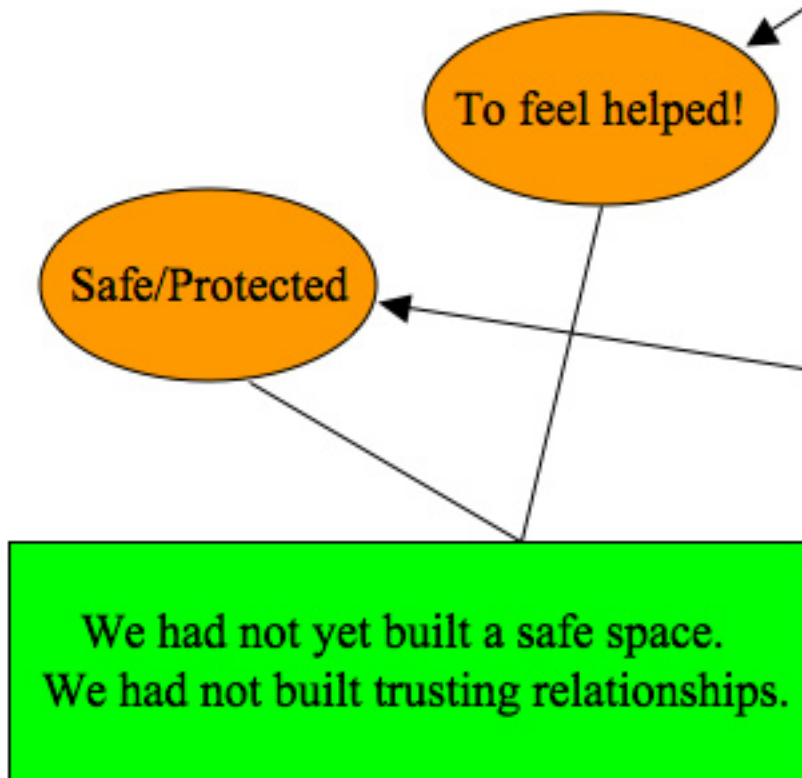


both structure
and flexibility

Story 1

But the facilitation of the process and the invitation for youth decision making were not enough to bring the youth back.

What was out of balance?



Story 2 CREATING A RAP

“We all need a way to begin – to generate creative thinking. It helps to have a tangible, concrete outcome in sight.”

Structure

Figure 1: Existing Lyrics

(Chorus: 1-2x)
Gotta fresh line up fresh outfit bouta have the parking lot on smash.
Plus I got a chevy with a 4-51 in da hood dat birth gov 1-25 in da
dash.
She like a gangsta cause
I'm the biggest boss that ya seen thus far (x3)
Cause it just another day in the life of a goddamn boss.

Figure 1: Youth looked up song lyrics they listened to and circled the parts they liked.

gotta be with the fresh outfit bouta have the parking lot on smash
plus I got a chevy with a 4-51 in da hood dat birth gov 1-25 in da dash
she like a gangsta cause
I'm the biggest boss that ya seen thus far (x3)
cause it just another day in the life of a goddamn boss

D'Evon

Figure 3: Four lines of lyrics by kids

1. Do you like the beat of the song more than the lyrics? Or the lyrics more than the beat?
The lyrics

2. Why did you circle what you circled?
because the way he says it

3. Why did you underline what you underlined?
because the rhymes go

4. If you wrote your own song, what would you write about? Explain.
(Examples: Love, Friendship, Hard Times, Family, Money, Standing Up for Yourself, Violence)
because I don't write a hard family.

5. Do you see this as a theme in your future? Does that seem positive or negative?
positive

Figure 2: Questions about lyrics

Figure 2: They filled out a worksheet on the lyrics they picked. Then we talked about the lyrics as a group.

Figure 3: They created their own lyrics and recorded them over beats in Garage Band.

Story 2 CREATING A RAP

Garage Band



Kids who had skills taught others

Flexibility



Lil' Dre preformed his creation



They were interested and familiar with rap.

skill

interest
familiar

Strong sense of ownership of the process and product

Once they are engaged, encourage the kids to be leaders. They will have a stronger sense of ownership.

Story 3

Creating A Video

In this example the kids had opportunity to practice video with easy projects – they used the video in two early productions... So they gained skills using the technology.

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s

Boys Vs. Girls: video



Structure



Flexibility

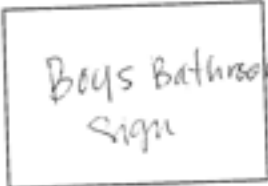
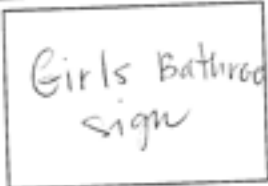
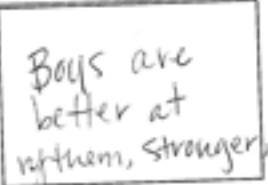
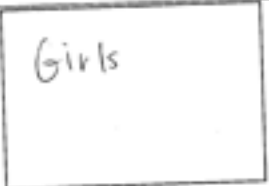
They had an idea about an end project but they didn't know all the steps along the way. Story boarding provided a map for the process.

Story 3

Creating A Video

Structure: Storyboard

Video Storyboard "He Said, She Said"

 <p>Boys Bathroom Sign</p>	 <p>Girls Bathroom Sign</p>
Shot # _____ Length _____ Shot Type: xcu cu ms ls Camera Angle: _____ Movement: _____ Audio: _____	Shot # _____ Length _____ Shot Type: xcu cu ms ls Camera Angle: _____ Movement: _____ Audio: _____
 <p>Boys are better at rapping, stronger, funnier...</p>	 <p>Girls</p>
Shot # _____ Length _____	Shot # _____ Length _____

When the project is long, they lose interest along the way. The story board helped them refocus.



Story 3

Creating A Video

Structure & Flexibility: The kids came up with questions using their creativity & the questions helped structure the video.

Lexi
Tesh-7th
NOTES
2/25/08

Interview Questions

- ① What would you do in college?
- ② What makes a girl consider cute?
- ③ Do you think that boys are just as good at dancing as girls?
- ④ What makes a boy consider cute?
- ⑤ Who do you think goof off more? BOYS or GIRLS? Why? explain.

Adult Interview Questions - Boys vs. Girls
By: Nathan Wenner, Alexis Kramer, & Ben Plante
2/25/08

1. Why do girls wear makeup?
2. Do you think girls eat different from boys?
3. Did you go to college? What did you study?
4. What are societies standards for a female to be cute?
5. What are societies standards for a male to be cute?
6. Do you think males are just as good at dancing?
7. Who do you think goof off more? Boys or Girls?
8. What do think about having separate sex classes?
9. How would you have felt if you had to go to a different school?
10. What type of movies do you like?
11. What are the differences between men and women?
12. Why do you think more girls go to college than boys? Is it the societies fault?
13. What do plan to do in your future?
14. What is your favorite subject?
15. How do think media portrays boys?
16. How do think media portrays girls?



Why do you think girls wear
make up

Why do you think boys and
girls have different diet

Encouragement to ask each other and adults questions leads to ownership

Some things that help create engaging spaces

Structure

- safe, trusting spaces and relationships
- concrete projects that are open ended
- ability to see the end product
- culminating work

Flexibility

- space where youth make decisions
- following youth questions & curiosities as they arise
- access to guidance in processes
- ability to change the plan in the moment if it's not working

Balance between flexibility and structure is a key to creating an environment that engages people and leads to ownership.



How do we, as youth workers, work with youth to maintain this balance?

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